

A Remedy against Despair.

4425. 28.

O R

A Brief Discourse wherein Great Sinners are Encouraged, and Directed how to improve the consideration of the Greatness of their *S I N S* in Praying to *G O D* for *P A R D O N*.

B E I N G

the Substance of Two *SERMONS* preached at the Lecture in *Boston*, 1699.

by *Samuel Willard*, Teacher of a Church there.

Mat. 43. 25. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own sake.

Magnam injuriam Deo facit, qui diffidit de ejus misericordia. Aug.

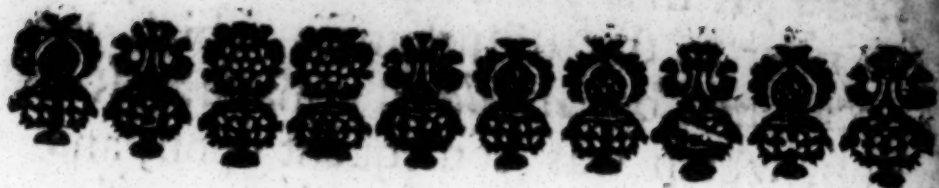
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PSAL. XXV. II.

*For thy Name sake, O Lord, pardon mine
Iniquity : for it is great.*

AT what time, or on what occasion this *Psalm* was penned by *David*, we are not told ; however the Contents of it give us to understand, that it was a time of complicated trouble with him ; his Enemies were grown insolent, and gave him great molestation ; and his Sins mean while pained his Conscience, and disquieted his

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mind

mind ; it may therefore be well supposed to refer to the disturbances which were occasioned by *Absaloms* unnatural Rebellion, which was consequent upon, and a threatned correction for his great sin in the matter of *Uriah*. The *Psalms* therefore is a prayer of Faith with which he addresseth God in this condition ; and is made up of petitions, and pleas where-with those petitions are enforced ; introduced with a profession of his recumbency on God in the midst of his distress, *verse* 1, 2. The Petitions, though interwoven in the *Psalms*, may be reduced to two heads, *viz.* for deliverance from his Enemies, and a discharge from the Guilt of his Sins ; in each whereof he fortifies his Faith, and strengthens his importunity with suitable arguments. Our *Text* is a *Petition* of the latter sort. In the words we may observe ;

1. The *Object* to whom he directs it, the *Lord* ; the word is, *Jehovah*, which is a proper and incommunicable name of God, and is no where ascribed to any second being whatsoever, but to the true God alone.

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2. The benefit which he petitioneth for, *viz. pardon or forgiveness*; the word properly signifies to pardon, or to spare of free grace or mercy, without any the least deserving in the Subject to whom it is applied: and *Criticks* observe that it is most commonly used in the Law of *Moses*, for such a forgiveness as is afforded, upon an oblation that hath been offered to God for the expiation of the Guilt contracted by the person; so that we may here suppose the *Psalmist* to have an eye of Faith upon the Sacrifice of Christ, which was to satisfy the Justice of God, in order to the obtaining of a Pardon for Sinners. Pardon presumes Guilt, and supposeth it to be removed by it.

3. The special Subject about which he petitioneth this benefit to be conferred upon him; *mine iniquity*: and here two things are to be considered.

1. It is Iniquity, in the singular number. I confess the word is sometimes used in the singular number, as a Name of multitude, comprehending in it all the Sins which the person hath ever been

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guilty

guilty of: but it seems here to refer to some one, which his Conscience was peculiarly wounded with the remembrance of, and may probably refer to that complicated sin of his that he had been guilty of, which hath already been mentioned; and the word here rendred, *Iniquity*, signifies *pravity*, or *perverseness*, and is used for the more bold and high-handed transgressions, that men do sometimes run themselves into; the word is also often intended for *Original Sin*, which is the pravity or perverseness of our nature, and unto which we ought to have a respect in all our Confessions of sin unto God.

2. It is his own sin, *mine iniquity*; he doth not lay it upon any other, but assumeth it wholly and entirely to himself, and acknowledgeth that he hath rendred himself Guilty by it; under which there is necessarily implied a confession, both of the sin it self as chargeable upon him, and also of the deserved Guilt that he hath contracted to himself by it.

4. The arguments by which he strengthens

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thens his Faith in making of this petition : indeed, every word doth tacitly carry an argument or plea in it, as might be made evident, but there are two which are expressed in the *Text* ; viz.

1. He pleads Gods *Name* for it : By the Name of God we are to understand God himself, as he hath revealed himself unto us in his Glorious Perfections, in which alone we can see any good ground to hope or pray for pardon ; and hence it either points us to the *Attributes* themselves, which shine forth in the procuring and applying of this forgiveness ; or to the Glory which will redound to those *Attributes* by it ; or to *Christ* who is the purchaser of this mercy for us, and may be equivalent to that in, *Dan. 9. 17. Hear the prayer, &c. for the Lords sake* ; and God himself hath said concerning *Christ* *Exod. 23. 21. My name is in him.*

2. He looks upon the greatness of his sin, for it is great. To what head we are to refer this argument, is matter of dispute, and accordingly there is a different reading given to it by Interpreters

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The particle translated *for*, is variously used in the Scriptures ; and more frequently in two senses ; it is sometimes used *Illatively*, to bring in the reason of that which went before, and then it is read *for*, and thus our Translation understand it ; and so it is used by *David* as an argument to enforce his pleading for pardon from God, in regard of the greatness of his sin ; sometimes it is used *discretively*, upon the grant of a thing which might seem to look to the contrary, and then it is read *although* ; and so have some rendred it in our *Text* : and then it is put to encourage faith to seek a pardon notwithstanding the greatness of his sin ; that he fortifieth against the discouragement which that might afford him. The word *great*, is used in the Scriptures both for *magnitude* and *multitude*, and is to be translated according as the sense will carry it, and both of them are often comprehended. If we take sin here *aggregatively*, to comprehend all his sins, both original and actual ; it then intends that they are very many, and grievously aggravated ;

aggravated ; but it we understand it only for some one particular and special sin ; it then intends that it is a very great one, and that it hath a great many wrapt in it ; and the *pronoun* particle, which is rendred *it*, is Emphatical : it intimateth as much, as if he did point with his finger to the particular iniquity, and say of it, *this, this is a very great sin.*

There are a great many precious practical Truths contained or implied in these words, which I cannot willingly overpass without some brief glance at them, before I come to the Case specially intended from them, *viz.*

DOCT. I. *The Children of God may sometimes fall into very Great Sins.* David was such an one at this time : he was a true Believer, *a man after Gods own heart* ; and yet he acknowledgeth his Sin, and puts that note upon it. Every Sin is great, as it is against God, and is a Violation of his Law ; for the least affront offered to that glorious being cannot be small : but there are some which are aggravated Sins ;

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Sins ; either as they are the more direct breaches of some of the greater and more leading Commands of God, or as they are awfully circumstanced, by which they are rendred the more presumptuous ; and such was that of *David* in both respects, as we shall find it amplified on in, *2 Sam. 12. begin.* That Godly men may fall into such Sins, there needeth no more to make it evident, than the instances of such in the word of God, which are there purposely recorded for our learning and warning. Besides, *Original Sin*, which remains in all Gods people as long as they live, hath every lust comprized in it, it being a whole *Body of Death*, and if God leaveth them to themselves, it will drag them into Captivity. So *Paul* complains of it, *Rom. 7. 23.* And God doth sometimes so leave them, as is said of him, *2 Chron. 32. 31. God left him, to try him.* Gods people are under the Command, as it is a Rule of Obedience, and every transgression or coming short in it is a Sin ; nor doth their being h's Children make it no Sin, or a little one : but it is a notorious

rious aggravation of it that such as are so related to him, and are thus obliged by him, do so. God hath holy ends in his thus leaving them; and will hereby humble them out of their carnal confidence, and magnify his Grace in Saving of them.

USE. *Let this then caution such as pretend to be the Children of God, and that in two respects.*

1. Beware of thinking your neglects or violations of the Command to be no Sins. How many have ruined their own Souls, by misunderstanding of that Text? *Rom. 6. 14. Ye are not under the Law, but under Grace.* As if Lying, Stealing, Swearing Whordom, &c. were no Sins if done by a Believer, but had lost the nature of Sin, because such do them. Such pretenders are strangers to the Grace of God, and shall know their delusion to their cost sooner or later.

2. Take heed of carnal confidence and negligence. That is a duty incumbent on all the people of God, *Eph. 5. 15. See that*

that ye walk circumspectly : And we here see what great reason there is for the constant practising of it. There is scarce one Sin, though never so foul and filthy, but you may be drawn into it, if God shall withdraw his preventing Grace from you ; and you will grievously provoke him so to do, if you thus neglect your selves ; and there are continual Sollicitations that will be offered to draw you into them : let therefore the thought of this be a monitour to you *not to be high minded, but to fear*

DOCT. II. *When God brings outward troubles on his People, these Sins of theirs may peculiarly trouble them.* Thus it was with the Psalmist at this time ; and this gave the Occasion for his putting up the petition in our Text. God sometimes brings personal afflictions on his own, for their tryal, as he did upon Job ; and yet then it is good for them to make a diligent search after Sin in themselves. But very often they are the corrections which he lays on them for some bold transgressions of theirs : and, because he intends to use them

them for their Correction and amendment, he therefore gives them some notice or other about those Sins, either by his Word and Ordinances, directing his Servants to meet with them, or in the very Language of the Providences themselves; with which he toucheth their Consciences, and makes them reflect, and charge such Sins upon themselves. Thus he did unto *David*, by *Nathan* in, *2 Sam. 12. begin.* and by *Gad*, when he had *numbred the People*, *Chap. 24. 10.* And when it is so, they are more distressed with the consideration of their sin, than with the affliction that is procured by it. Yea this is it which puts the greatest bitterness into the affliction it self, and well it may, because hereby they discern anger in the rod, which is more terrible to them than all the rage of Death and Hell: yea they could be contented to be corrected, so they might but be assured that it were not in wrath, but in love and compassion; hence that request of the Prophet, *Jer 10. 24. Ob Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing*

USE.

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USE.

USE. *Let such as fear God take this for a daily watch word, to make them afraid of every Temptation to sin.*

It may be for the present, you may swallow the bait, and not feel the hook to prick you, but you know not how soon God may in his Providence visit you with some remarkable affliction, and then bring this sin to your remembrance, and if he do, you will find the bitterness of it; little do you think at present, how much gall and wormwood this will put into the Cup: now the lashes of Conscience within, will be more terrible than all the outward strokes of Providence, though never so severe. Now it will be a comfortable Cordial, to be able at such a time to say as the Church, Psal. 44. 17, 18. *All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way. And to appeal with him, Job 16. 17. Not for any injustice in mine hand; also my prayer is pure.*

DOCT. III. *There is sometimes one sin, that lies more heavily on the Conscience of Gods Children, in a time of trouble.* The design of Affliction indeed, is to put us upon the making of a thorough search for all sin; but oftentimes there is some one that gives special occasion for the affliction, God being peculiarly provoked by it, and thereupon the Spirit of God bears it more heavily on the Conscience at such a time than any other, though thereby he leads us up to the fountain of all, as he did David, Psal. 53. 3. *with 5. I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me; behold I was shapen in iniquity; and it is evident that God is more especially dishonoured by some one sin, than by others, and the sin it self is more prodigious and presumptuous, and leaves deeper wounds in the Soul, which when the sense thereof is revived, draw our thoughts that way, and God will leave proportionable impressions on our hearts thereby.*

USE. *And let this be a constant caution*

to us to beware how we give way to the temptations of sin that are urged upon us.

Doth God at any time make one sin so bitter to us, that we cannot endure the terrors of it, but are ready to sink under them; the burden of them hath such a load that we are oppressed with it, and roar under it? Surely he doth hereby caution us to look to our ways, and beware of multiplying transgressions against him; if one be so terrible, what will many be? this should put force in that argument, and make it powerful in our resistance, Gen 39. 9. *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*

DOCT. IV. *The Sins of Gods own people stand in need of forgiveness.* Not only those sins which they committed before they were Converted; and their persons were Justified, but those they fall into afterwards do need a pardon. Though they are as to their state, delivered from Condemnation, and shall no more be in danger of the Eternal Wrath of God; which is a great encouragement to them
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to hope for, and to seek remission upon their falls: yet when at any time they are overtaken with sin, they provoke God thereby, and lay themselves open to his holy Displeasure, and can have no peace in themselves, or security from his judgments, till a pardon be gotten. There is a sort of *Guilt* that cleaves to them, which they must seek the removal of in order to the restoring of their comfort; he prays for this, Psal. 51. 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation*; for this reason our Saviour made it a petition to be daily put up by all his Disciples, Mat. 6. 12. *Forgive us our Debts*.

USE. *Let this then Excite us, if at any time we are overtaken with any sin, to be restless till we have obtained the pardon of it.*

To this end let us maintain in our selves the exercise of Repentance. God hath put these two together, Acts 5. 31. *Him hath he Exalted by his Right-hand, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.* Take heed of nourishing carnal security,

curity, with the presumption of your justified Estate, and thinking that you are thereby safe, so as that God will not charge any transgression upon you; assure we our selves, that sin which we have not repented of, and gotten a sealed pardon for, will look terribly upon us, when Conscience shall charge it home, and we have nothing to shew for the forgiveness of it.

DOCT. V. *The Children of God must ask for a pardon, if they would obtain it. God hath appointed a medium for the conveyance of those saving benefits to his people, which have been purchased by Christ for them: and he hath made prayer to be necessary in this order, Ezek 36. 37, I will for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; hence that in Jer. 29. 12, 13. Then shall ye go and pray to me, and I will hearken unto you; & ye shall seek me, & find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart; and as he hath required it, so he hath encouraged it, Psal 50. 15. Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee. God hath*

hath a pardon ready, only he waits to be asked for it, that we may, by so doing, testify the sense that we have of our need of it, and acknowledge to him his great kindness to us, when we obtain it. Nor indeed are we in a fit posture to receive a pardon at his hand, till we are brought upon our knees, that we may take it of him in that humble and prostrate posture; and in this prayer there must be a cordial sense of the sin, and of the great vileness of it, accompanied with a sincere Confession of it; and therefore till we come to this, we may expect to be in sore distress; but in this way there is relief to be had. We have an account of *David's* experience in both these respects, Psal. 32. 3, 4, 5. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, &c. I acknowledged my sin to thee, &c. and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*

USE. Let this then direct us what to do, when we are under Conviction and Remorse, by reason of any sin that we have made ourselves Guilty of. Let it direct us to prayer;

and let us encourage our Faith in prayer. Is this the way to obtain forgiveness? let us not be so unwise as to go without it, for want of so doing: how justly will God continue us under our distress, if we neglect to seek a deliverance from it? and to establish our faith in praying for this benefit, let us consider that God never rejected any that duly sought to him for it; how many, how great, how aggravated soever their sins have been; he waits to be called on, and he takes notice who it is that doth so. Even a persecuting and malicious *Saul*, when he is made to fall upon his knees, hath that remark made upon him, *Acts 9. 11. behold he prays.*

DOCT. VI. *God alone is to be addressed for pardon.* We must not only ask it, but of him, if we would obtain it. Men may be wronged by us, and if we have offered them any injury, it is our duty to seek reconciliation with them, and attend proper means for that end; but it is God who is sinned against, *Psal. 51. 4.*
Against

*Against thee, thee only have I sinned; and therefore he must be sought to for a pardon. Forgiveness of sin is a Divine prerogative; none can apply it authentically to the Sinner but God: if it comes not under his hand and seal, it signifies nothing. It is true, we must go to him for it in Christ's name, or else we shall certainly miss of it; for it is one of the benefits which he hath purchased for us, at the price of his own blood; but we must not seek it any where else. The Jews were in the right of it, in *Thesi*, when they said, *Mark 2. 7. None can forgive sins but God. David* therefore giveth this praise to him alone, in *Psal. 103. 3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.**

USE. *Let this encourage us to hope for forgiveness, and accordingly to seek it; because God is the object at whose hand it is to be sought. And indeed there is great motive contained in this consideration; inasmuch as he hath a stock of it with him; this the Psalmist pleads; Psal. 130. 4. There is forgiveness with thee, that thou*
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mayst

mayst be feared ; he hath laid in a sufficiency for it, in the Redemption wrought out by Christ, of whom we are told, Heb. 7. 25. *That he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him ;* and he hath an heart disposed to pardon such as do come to him aright for it ; and hence it is one of his *Titles* in which he hath commended himself to us, Psal. 86. 5. *Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive ;* let us then be sure to apply our selves to him for it, and seek it at no other door ; and in this way we are likely to speed. How ready was the Father to meet, and how kindly did he entertain his returning Prodigal, Luk. 15. 20. *He arose and came to his father : but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him.*

DOCT. VII. *The sense of Guilt should not discourage Gods People from seeking of him deliverance in times of trouble. It is indeed then an hour of Temptation ; Satan, and a misgiving heart, at such a time,*

time, offer to drive us to despondency, when sin and sorrow meet together. However the people of God ought not to be overwhelmed in their minds, when it is so, and think it in vain to hope and seek for deliverance of God, because he is justly provoked at them. *David* resolves against giving way to sinking fears in such a condition, *Psal. 49. 5. Wherefore should I fear in the day of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?* and that was the encouragement which that good man offered to the Jews at such a time, in *Ezra 10. 2. We have trespassed against our God, &c. yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing;* and truly, both these are Gods works, and he is to be waited on to do them, both to put away the sin which hath provoked him to bring trouble upon us, and to remove the sorrow that hath been procured by our sin: the one therefore ought not to discourage us in regard of the other, but rather to excite us to make haste the faster to him.

USE. *Let this then rebuke such as nourish despondencies and despair in them, by such reflexions as these are.* God indeed afflicts you, that he may thereby make your Sin bitter to you, and humble you to his feet, under the sense of it; but this is not to drive you from him, or to make you think that he will not hear and help you in your trouble, but to excite you the more earnestly to seek it of him. And truly, there is nothing that should make us more earnest in going to God for deliverance, when we are under his afflicting hand, then to consider that our Sins have procured this for us, and therefore there is none that can give us deliverance but he, inasmuch as he alone can take away the cause of our trouble, which is our Sin.

DOCT. VIII. *The proper course to obtain deliverance from trouble, is to seek first the forgiveness of Sin.* This is it which is the *Moral* procuring cause of that; and as long as sin remains unpardoned, Gods
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controversy abides ; and then it is not to be wondered at, if our crys and howlings for deliverance are not heard. God therefore directs to such a course as this is in a time of distress ; *Joel 2. 12. Therefore now turn to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and weeping, and mourning, &c.* And tells them what success it should have, *Verse 18. Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people, &c.* Till then, the sin be repented of, and taken out of the way, God threatens that he will go on in his anger, *Josh 7. 12, 13. Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed thing from among you : Thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.* And indeed, if we have not obtained a pardon of God, the outward deliverance which he affords us, is but a respite, and the controversy still abides.

USE. Learn hence the miserable folly of those who, in times of trouble, seek no farther than to have their outward Calamity removed. This is the ready way to lose all our attempts,

tempts, or put case they should succeed, this very success would be in a way of anger and not of love ; and we have a great deal of reason to be afraid of such a deliverance. Would we have a gracious and an abiding deliverance at any time ? Let us make that our great care, to see that God and we are atoned ; this therefore was the Churches triumph after all her sorrows, *Isa. 12. begin. I will praise thee : though thou was angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.*

DOCT. IX. *Confession is to be made of particular Sins, in order to the obtaining a Pardon of them.* David indeed mentions all his Sins, *Verse 18. Look upon mine affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my Sins.* But he also specifies them, as in *Verse 7. Remember not the Sins of my Youth.* And he comes to individuals, *Text, Pardon mine Iniquity.* He brings one sin, and spreads it open before God, and prays, *Lord, pardon this Sin :* And thus we have him again at it, *Psal. 51. 14. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my Salvation.*

vation. And the truth is, there can be no kindly Repentance of sin, unless we descend to particulars : For, though we must be acquainted with, and bewail the fountain of sin which is in us, yet we are led up unto this by the streams that issue from it; nor can we have a kindly apprehension of it, but by feeling the woful effects of it in those fruits that grow upon it, and which are discovered in our hearts and lives. And indeed, all conviction of sin beginneth here, though it terminates not in one, but leads us farther, even into those *Chambers of Imagery*, where all *Abominations* are to be seen.

USE. Hence see the folly and deceitfulness of general Confessions and Repentances. For, though we can never reach, to every individual sin that we are chargable withal; for *Who can understand his Errors ! Psal 19. 12.* And so it is impossible for us to spread every one particularly before God in our acknowledgments ; yet it is a great truth, that he who hath not seen and bewailed his own vileness in some particular sins, hath

hath never done so at all in truth. These general Confessions ; *I and all men are Sinners ; the Lord forgive me, I am not perfect, &c.* are miserable senceless things, and he that cannot tell wherein he is so, and lay his finger upon the sore, hath never Confessed his Sin to God aright.

DOCT. X. *Our plea for forgiveness is to be built on Gods Name.* If we would pray for it successfully, we must pray believably, *Jam. i. 6.* But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. And faith must have something to bear its weight upon : And it is of Infinite concernment that it be something that will hold it up, else it will fail us, and leave us to sink in dependency. Our prayers must be argumentative, but we must see that the arguments that we make use of are good, otherwise they will not avail us. There are many that pray, and plead with much vehemency, but they speed not ; and why ? but because they ground their pleadings wrong, build them on a false bottom. Some plead their own righteousness

ousness and goodness ; So did that *Pharisee*, *Luk. 18. 11.* *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men, &c.* but he was not Justified in that way : whereas the poor *Publican* had but one plea, and that succeeded, *Verse 13.* And we then ask in Gods Name, when we renounce all our reliance else where, and acknowledge our entire dependence to be on his free Grace, of which he hath the Sovereign disposal in his own hands. When we acknowledge our deserving of the contrary, and resolve all into his undeserved mercy : So he applied himself to God, *Dan. 9. 8, 9.* *O Lord, to us belongs confusion of face : to the Lord our God belong mercies & forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.* And reason good, for all our hope of finding acceptance with God, is in the New Covenant, which was opened on purpose for the display of the riches of his Grace, which is through the Lord Jesus Christ : this then is the Name of God by which he commends himself to fallen man.

USE. *Learn hence, that the more humble we*

we are, the more fit are we to ask, and the more likely to obtain pardon from God. The humble Soul sees nothing in himself, no worthiness at all of his own; is put by all pleas from any thing that he either is or hath; he sees that there is no hope for him but in the free Grace of God, and it is vain for him to look any where else: and therefore he resolves to improve no other arguments in his petitioning of God for pardon, but such as refer to his Great Name. For this reason we are told what pleasure God taketh in the humble, Isa. 57. 15. I dwell with him who is of a contrite and humble Spirit. Job 22. 29. He shall save the humble person. Psal. 138. 6. Though the Lord be high, he hath a respect unto the lowly.

DOCT. XI. Gods Children ought to aggravate their sin, in the confession of it, in order to their asking of a pardon; thus doth the Psalmist here: and this hath been the constant course which the people of God upon Scripture Record, have been wont to take: and accordingly they have put

put to their confessions, those circumstances whereby they might give to their sin, the most odious face that they could; thus *Moses* sets out the sin of his people, *Exod. 32. 31.* *Oh! this people have sinned a great sin; thus those Godly ones, in Ezra 9. Neh. 9. & Dan. 9.* Do amplify on this subject, when they set themselves to seek mercy of God; and as these did so in respect of their people, with whom they involved themselves, so we shall find that they have done on a particular and personal account, thus did *David*, *2 Sam. 24. 10.* *I have sinned greatly in that I have done, and now I beseech thee, Oh Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly; so doth Paul, 1 Tim. 1. 13, 15.* *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, and a chief Sinner; and this is that which God expects of them, in order to his free forgiving of them, Lev. 26. 40. &c. If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, and their trespass, &c. then I will remember my Covenant, &c. and there is great reason for it, because this makes*
way

way for the greater glory to be ascribed to him by them, when they shall experience his free pardon bestowed upon them, notwithstanding the manifold provocation there was given him by those sins of theirs: and this is the very thing that God aims at in the Dispensations of his grace to his people that have sinned against him.

USE. Learn we hence the great folly of those who seek to encourage their hope of pardon, by mincing, extenuating and excusing their sins. How many are there who seek to quiet their Consciences, and strengthen their faith by this? I confess I have not done well, I cannot deny but that I have failed, and ought to have been more watchful to my self; but I hope that God will not charge it upon me; I was tempted, it was too hard for me, I allowed not my self in it, and it is no such great matter, as another in my circumstances would have done as bad or worse, &c. This is to undermine the great aim of the New-Covenant, & is a certain evidence that such an one is not brought

brought to a kindly repentance. True, we ought not so to aggravate our sin as to drive us to despair, as Cain did, who said, Gen. 4. 13. *Mine Iniquity is greater than can be forgiven*; for this will hinder us from going to God: but we ought to put every other aggravation to it, which the nature and circumstance of it call for.

DOCT. XII. *The greatness of our sins ought not to discourage us from seeking forgiveness of God, but drive us the faster to him.* Thus it was with the Psalmist, Text. If there were any sin that could out-do the power and efficacy of the Grace of God, and be too big for the merit of Christ, to obtain a pardon for, there would be reason enough for such a sin to drive us to despair; because there is no other hope but this set before us: but because there is no such thing, for we are told, 1 Joh. 1. 7. *The blood of Christ cleanseth from* ext: A: there is therefore no reason to be disheartened. Nay, because C will make sin to be a foil for

for his grace to be illustrated ; hence the more multiplied and magnified our sins have been, the greater occasion there is for the shining out of that grace the more illustriously, in his so pardoning of us ; according to, *Rom. 5. 20. Where Sin abounded, there Grace did much more abound ;* it offers us powerful motive to come to him for pardon, because his Grace hath a special subject before it, for this glory to be advanced, and the Grace appearing in it to be admired : God therefore thus encourageth great sinners, *Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return to the Lord, for he will have mercy, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

USE: Let this then reprove those that nourish despondency in them on this account. How many are there that do so, refuse to receive advice ; yea, thrust away all encouragement that is at any time offered to them, as if it could reach their condition ? their sins are many, and so great, and there have been so many aggravations

aggravations attending on them, that they dare not to adventure to seek a pardon for them; nor dare they believe that any gracious word exprest in the *Scriptures* belongs or may be applied to them; how preposterous is this? it carries the very language of hell in it: and how doth this contradict the Counsel of God, in contriving the Salvation of Sinners? are you loth that Christ should try his skill upon you, and prove the infinite value and vertue of his great Redemption on such as you are? why should you be afraid of being rejected by reason of this, when God himself hath put in a precious antidote against such a demur as this? *Isa* 1. 28. *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

DOCT. XIII. *A right consideration of the greatness of our sin, is very helpful to our profitable seeking a pardon from God. David makes use of it to this very purpose in our Text: And here cometh in that great Case to be enquired into, viz.*

Quest. Of what use the consideration of the greatness of our sin is, in our pleading with God for forgiveness?

A. This Case being practical; and because the Children of God have daily occasion to make use of it in their addresses to him in prayer, I shall endeavour to give a distinct account of it; and to make way to the thing it self, let me offer the following Conclusions.

1. That pardon of sin is an act of Gods free grace. As a pardon supposeth a sin whereby the person hath made himself Guilty, else there would be no occasion for it; so it is a special way whereby the Guilt comes to be removed. It finds the person insolvent, utterly unable to repair the wrong he hath done to the Declarative Glory of God, and so make satisfaction for his Guilt, and thereupon it delivers him from it frankly; thus our Saviour Christ expresseth it in that Parable, Luk. 7 42. *When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.* Nor could
sin

sin have ever been remitted to the Sinner in any other way but this; for, neither could he for himself, nor yet could the whole Creation for him, make a due compensation to injured Justice on his account: *So dear is their Redemption, and it must have ceased for ever, Psal. 49 8.* and that God would thus forgive him, is an act of meer grace, to which he was not at all obliged by any natural necessity, but was altogether free in it; and the Sinner had given him sufficient provocation righteously to have destroyed him for ever.

2. *That hence God useth his absolute Sovereignty in chusing the Subjects of the application of it.* That this pardon is not a priviledge bestowed upon all Guilty Sinners, is a truth plentifully born witness to in the Word of God. *Though all have sinned, Rom. 5. 12.* Yet all Sinners are not forgiven, but there are multitudes left to *dy in their sins*, and there is by this a great discrimination made between men. Now, if a reason of this difference be sought, it must be resolved negatively, that it is not because one is

in himself, or his natural state better than another, for we read, *Rom. 3. 9. Are we better than they? no, in no wise; and verse 22. There is no difference; and Eph. 2. 3. We are children of wrath by nature, even as others.* Nor is it because one addressed God for it, and the other neglected so to do; for God saith, *Isa. 65. 1. I am found of them that sought me not, and we are told, Luk. 19. 10. The Son of man is come to seek & save that which is lost.* Nor is it because that God foresaw that these would accept of Christ upon the offers of him made to them, and believe in him, and that the others would refuse him, and harden their hearts in unbelief, and thereby judge themselves unworthy of eternal life; for with regard to multitudes of those who are not pardoned, they never had any revelation of Christ, and of forgiveness to be obtained by him, made unto them; or any terms of reconciliation and peace proposed to them, and consequently never did refuse their compliance with them: and as to those to whom this discovery is made, he could foresee nothing in

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in them, but what he ^{at} Sinners passed 41
to bestow upon them, for any that are
because he loved us first, I fit. We must
that all must finally result in the so-
raignty of his will, according to *Ro. 9.*
18. *He hath mercy on whom he will have
mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

3. That hence nothing in the Subject can
be properly a motive to put him upon bestow-
ing this favour upon it. The will of God,
being the Supream cause of all his works
of Efficiency, cannot be moved by any
thing out of himself, to do any of them :
for then it were not absolutely free and
independent, as it is. The very notion
of a *Motive*, refers to an impulsive cause,
moving upon the affections, & that either
by *Instinct*, as in sensitive creatures, or by *mo-
ral swasions*, as in Rational beings; & there-
fore when it is attributed to God, we are
to conceive of it after the manner of men:
and what can there be in the Subject that
should move God to this Compassion ?
Not the misery which it is under by rea-
son of the Curse and Condemnation that
is upon it ; for, as it justly deserves it, and

in himself, or his by the righteous sentence
 another, for we law, in the execution
 better than they, can and will Glorify his
 7. *There* all Attribute is precious to him,
 and delights in the manifestation of it;
 So the same misery lyeth upon all such to
 whom this pardon is not given; for there
 is no other way to remove it but only
 one: and yet these are equally his Crea-
 tures with the other, and every whit as
 capable of being made the monuments of
 mercy, in whom the glory of it would e-
 qually shine forth. Nor is it the disposi-
 tion in any making of them more ready
 to accept of a pardon & to close in with
 the Gospel terms on which it is offered,
 for our Saviour saith, *Math. II. 21. If the*
mighty works that are done in you, had been
done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have re-
pent long ago in sackcloth and ashes: And
 the Apostle confesseth, *Tit. 3. 3. We our*
selves were sometimes disobedient. Nor the
 greatness of their Sin; for, as the greater
 the Sin is, the more of provocation is
 thereby offered to God, and his holy and
 just indignation is incensed proportiona-
 bly;

against Despair.

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bly ; So there are as great Sinners passed by and not pardoned, as any that are made to share in this benefit. We must therefore, after all our enquiries, finally resolve all into a *What if God willing, Rom. 9. 22.*

4. *That yet there is something in the Subject from which God takes the advantage to advance his Glory in pardoning of them* We conceive of God as an Intelligent Agent, or a cause by Counsel, and accordingly that he must necessarily have some worthy design, and such as becometh himself, in all his works. Hence, as he hath a last end in them, which he resolves to advance by them, so he doth wisely accommodate all the *Media* most advantageously to serve to this end : and though the contrivance be of such an unfathomable depth, as infinitely transcends our short comprehension, yet we must under-write with him, *Psal. 104. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all.* God seeks his own Glory in the pardoning of a Sinner, for the exaltation whereof, he taketh an occasion from
some.

Something in the Sinner, by the which he may carry on this purpose of his, and from thence get to himself a great Name : So that though he is not moved by it, but acts his pleasure, yet he makes use of it in subserviency thereto ; we are told in 2 *Thes.* 1. 10. *That he will be admired in those that Believe.*

5. *That there is a way in the New Covenant, which God hath laid out for the Communication of this benefit to us.* Not only did he lay in for the procuring of such a favour to be conferred upon Sinners ; which was done in the Covenant of Suretyship, in which he indented with his own Son to lay down the purchase of it ; but for which it could never have been conferred on any of *Adams* Children, consistent with the Righteousness of the first Covenant ; but he hath also made known how they may come to obtain a Title to this benefit, and this is held forth in the Covenant of Grace. For this reason the *Gospel Promises* are exhibited on terms ; and these terms therein proposed, do not only tell us what it is that God requires of Sinners

Sinners in the treaty of Peace which he opens and manageth with them in the external and ministerial dispensation of the Covenant, but they do also give us to understand after what manner God will by his Grace convey a pardon to Sinners, by a powerful working of the terms in all those whom he hath a design to make partakers therein; So that if ever he forgive them, he will bring them to it in this way; & therefore there is an inseparable connexion made between them in the Gospel; *Mark I 6. 16. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned; & Joh. 3. 36. He that believeth in the Son of God, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

6. *That to this way belongs their coming to him for, and their asking it of him.* When God had mentioned the many and great priviledges of the New-Covenant, which he promised to bestow upon his people, at such time as he should return to them in a way of Grace, he enters that clause,
Ezek.

Exek. 36. 37. I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do this for them. It is true, there must be the intervention of his preventing Grace, by which they must be enabled and excited thus to do, or else they will never put up one sincere petition to him; however this is the order in which he brings them to a participation in it; they shall seek to him for a pardon, and upon their so doing, they shall find it. When *David* had told how he obtained one, *Psal. 32. 5.* he adds that observation, verse 6. *For this shall every one that is Godly pray unto thee, in a time wherein thou mayest be found;* and there is the greatest reason that Sinners should thus come unto him, and after this manner wait upon him for it if they would enjoy it; and they are worthy to go for ever without it, who will not stoop to petition for it. Nay, it is a wonderful condescendency in the Great God, and an admirable expression of his rich grace, that he hath given encouragement to such to come unto him for it, by promising that if they so come, they shall speed,
Mat.

Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Whereas he might have utterly refused them, and never opened this door of mercy to them: they might have called and had no answer, sought him early, and yet not found him.

7. *That there is a right seeking of him in order to the obtaining of this benefit.* It is not every sort of seeking that will do here. Our Saviour hath told us, in *Luk. 13. 24. I say unto you, many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able;* and when the Prophet in Gods name, gives this encouragement to that People, he yet thus limits it, *Jer. 29. 13. Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye seek for me with all your heart;* there are prayers, which in Gods account, are no better than *bowlings*, and these he will not hear; and there are effectual prayers which are prevalent with him, we are told on this account, *Jam. 5. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Now there are these ingredients requisite in that prayer that shall find mercy at the hand of God.

1. *We must seek to God for this favour.* He must be the alone object to whom we direct our petition; we must go to him, and no whither else, acknowledging that it is with him alone; we must say, with him, *Jer. 3. 23. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.* We must acknowledge that it is his prerogative to forgive us, that *forgiveness is with him, Psal. 130. 4.* And accordingly in our coming to him we must utterly renounce all affiance in any other but him, and say, *Ashur shall not save us, &c. Hosea 14. 7.*

2. *We must make a free and humble Confession of our Guilt and Demerit.* God puts in that clause, when he invites *Backsliding Israel to Return*, and makes the offer of mercy to them if they so do, *Jer. 3. 13. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, &c.* And there can be no right prayer to God for pardon, without this confession either exprest or implied; for as a pardon sup-
poseth

poseth Guilt, so the asking a pardon pre-
sumes a Confession of that Guilt, and the
righteousness of the Sentence contained
in it: And to such a Confession is the
encouraging promise made, *Prov. 28. 13.*
Whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall have
mercy: and of the good success of so do-
ing, David sets the Seal of his experience,
Psal. 32. 5. I said I will confess my trans-
gressions to the Lord; and thou forgavest the
iniquity of my Sin.

3. We must renounce all that is in our
selves, as to any dependance on it to obtain a
pardon withal. We must not only reject
other objects, but all arguments, but what
are fetcht from God himself. We must
have no confidence in the flesh; bring
nothing of our own to make a plea with-
al, but lay our selves in the dust pleading
nothing but the meer mercy of God: we
must come in the form and quality of
beggars; *Isa. 55. 1. Come without money,*
and without price; that so we may receive
it of him as an alms. And in special we
are to reject our own Righteousness, and
refer our selves to the compassion of God,
as,

as, Dan. 9. 18, 19. *We do not present our Supplications before thee for our Righteousness, but for thy great mercies : O Lord hear, O Lord forgive.*

4. Hence we must ask with a resignation of our selves to his Mercy. We must acknowledge that it is free with him to receive us or reject us, and that if he doth receive us it is beyond our deserving : if, when we ly never so low at his footstool, he spurn us from thence, it is no injustice, and that if he take us up into his arms, it is astonishing kindness. We are therefore to refer it to his free will, believing that it is in his power to do so for us, and say as the Leper did, Math. 8. 2. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

5. *We must come in Christ's Name.* There is no other way in which God communicates the saving benefits of the New-Covenant, but through Christ, who hath purchased them for us : and therefore to come in any other Name is altogether vain, and will prove altogether fruitless. *God out of Christ, is a consuming fire, Heb.*

12. ult. But in and through him he is propitious; Christ himself therefore both directs and encourageth us thus to do, *Joh. 14. 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

6. *We must ask in Faith.* This is a qualification belonging to every Evangelical Duty, in order to its finding acceptance with God, for we are told, *Heb. 11. 6. That without faith it is impossible to please God;* for, as the bond of union on our part; between Christ and us, is faith, so we are to maintain Communion with him in all his priviledges by the continued exercises of it; *Heb. 10. 38. And the Just shall live by his faith;* and to hope to be heard in any other prayer, but such as mounts to heaven on the wings of faith, is vain; that is a caution always to be carried with us, *Jam. 1. 6. But let him ask in faith.*

8. Hence, whatsoever serves to the furtherance of our right seeking of God, is profitable in this case. That which is a proper and an approved help to our obtaining of pardon, and finding the good and com-

fort of it, and being helped suitably to acknowledge God in it, will be of great use in our prayers: for, God hath appointed us to make use of those helps which he hath told us of in his Word, and hath accommodated to be serviceable to our doing our duty; and indeed we cannot do well without them. We must go to the Word of God for our direction about these, nor may we suppose that it is left to our own foolish arbitrement, to use things which our own fancies are moved by; but we are to acquiesce in what God hath commanded, who only is able to bless them unto good success.

9. *There are many respects in which the consideration of the greatness of our sins will be helpful in this affair; and these are now to be considered of, for the more direct resolution of the Case before us, which are more especially such as follow.*

I. *This consideration rightly entertained, will put us upon seeking a pardon. Though all the lost progeny of Adam stand in need*

need of forgiveness, yet how few are there of thole, among whom this benefit is proclaimed, and who are with all earnestness invited to embrace it, who regard it, or enquire how they may come at it? The Prophets complaint is still of force, *Isa. 53. 1. Who hath believed our report?* The most of men that sit under the Gospel, do practically bid Christ to depart, and carry his pardon where it is wanted, if he would put it off, as for them they need it not, they desire it not; why else do men live content without one, or why do we hear no more crying out, *What shall we do to be saved?* And surely this is either because they do not believe themselves to be Sinners, and under Guilt, or else because they do not know what it is to be so. Whereas a looking upon Sin in its true colours, and its greatness, will serve to promote this enquiry, and make us serious in it; and that,

1. *By shewing us the greatness of our Guilt.* Guilt derives from the Sanction of the Law, and is the binding of the

Sentence of the threatening of it upon the person, who hath by sin brought himself under it. Hereupon the greater the sin is, the more severe is the threatening, and consequently the more aggravated is the Guilt, and great Guilt that is felt must needs make persons proportionably concerned to get it removed. He who looks upon sin to be but a small thing, reckons the Guilt of it easy to bear, and that makes him regardless of getting it taken away. *Prov. 14. 9. Fools make a mock of sin.* Whereas he that apprehends his sin to be great, feels his Guilt heavy, and would fain be eased of it, *Psal. 38 i. with 4. Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath; for mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.*

2. By convincing us of what reason there is that we cannot expect to escape the threatened misery, unless we get a pardon. The reason why the generality of sinful men are no more concerned to get the Sentence that is upon them removed, is because they think it is no such great matter,

ter, whether it be or no; and that which maketh them so easy in this regard, is a presumption that they nourish in themselves, that God will not exact so severely upon them, as his Ministers do give them warning of, and that there is more fright than hurt in these threatnings. We have men of such a spirit as this characterized, in *Deut. 29. 19.* *When he hears the Words of this Curse, he bleſseth himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart; and there are a great many ſuch as theſe who live in places of light. Whereas, did men believe that they ſhall not eſcape, except a pardon be reaſonably obtained, they could not be ſo quiet; and the reaſon why they do not believe it, is becauſe they have ſuch diminutive thoughts of their ſin. When therefore God comes to convince Sinners of the woful danger they ly open to, he diſplays their ſin to them in its vileness and abominableness, and when he hath ſo done, he challengeth them*

to be judges whether there be any ground to expect that he should not execute the Sentence of his wrath upon them : *Jer.*

5. 7, 9. How shall I pardon thee for this ? Shall I not visit for these things ? And this puts us upon deliberating with greatest intenseness on that demand, *Heb. 2. 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect this so great Salvation ?*

3. By perswading us of the fearful misery that awaits us, if we get not a pardon. Guilt binds Sinners over to punishment, and this penalty holds a proportion with that Guilt : and there are greater miseries for those that have been Guilty of greater Sins. Hence, by the suitable apprehension of the greatness of our Sin, we shall be filled with a suitable terrour at the expectation of the greater wrath that awaits us : and he that hath gotten a right conception of the misery which is deserved by the least Sin, cannot but bestir himself to get it removed : How concerned then must the Soul needs be, which hath in its view the prospect of those peculiar effects of Divine revenge, which he hath exposed

exposed himself unto, and is every moment lyable to the execution of, if he gets not into the *City of Refuge*? See how it was with *David*, *Psal. 32. 4.* *Day and night thine hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of Summer.* And doubtless it was this apprehension that brought him into such a condition.

2. *This Consideration will make us to go to God, and him alone for pardon.* We are too ready to seek our help in other objects, but this will keep us from going to, or knocking at any other door: it will make us to say to our selves, as he, *Psal. 62. 5, 6.* *My Soul wait thou only upon God; he only is my rock, and my salvation:*

And that;

1. *By shewing us that such Sins cannot have their Guilt removed, but by a free pardon.* That if it be not given to us, we can never have it. This affords an undeniable demonstration that it must be utterly beyond our ability to make satisfaction to the offended Law, and atone the Justice of God to us; that *Thousands of Rams,*

and ten Thousand of Rivers of Oyl will not do it ; and that if it be not provided for and given to us on free cost, we must despair of our getting it. The want of having such a view of Sin, makes men to think that a confession, and overly repentance, a good work, &c. will make amends, make up the breach between God and them, and turn away his wrath from them : whereas this drives them out of their refuges of lies, and shews them that the demerit of Sin out-bids all they can do for the expiation of it, and that therefore they must seek some where else for it.

2. *By discovering that none else can pardon them but he.* The greatness of Sin truly discovered carries evidence in it, that it cannot be less than a Divine work to forgive it. Men that have low thoughts of Sin, reckon a pardon to be nothing ; but they that see how great it is, believe that it is a work of Omnipotency. When Moses petitioned God to pardon his peoples sin, he requests that he will manifest his power in it, Numb. 14. 17. *And now I beseech thee,*
let

let the power of my Lord be great : and the extensiveness of his mercy, Verse 19. *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy.* And in this Article God is acknowledged to be incomparable, *Mic. 7. 18. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage ?* Nor indeed is there any thing in which he more appears to be God, than in this : and the conviction of it is because great Sins require a great God to forgive them ; and thereupon it must be sought of him alone.

3. *By assuring us that if we obtain it not of him, we must needs perish.* When Sin comes to be felt in its weight, it not only saith in our Consciences that we must either get it removed from us, or else it will sink us into the nethermost hell, but also that we must go to God for it, or we are undone. That *Destruction* is upon us, and that he only can *Ransom* us from it, by forgiving us. It saith, that if an holy God finds us under the Guilt of these Sins, and that if we have not re-
ceived

ceived a pardon under his hand, *We cannot escape the vengeance of Hell.*

3. *This Consideration helps to humble us into a right frame in our coming to God for pardon.* There is a right frame, and only the humble Soul hath it, and this is promoted by such thoughts divers ways.

1. *It beats us off from our own Righteousness.* When we go to God for remission, we would fain carry something of our own with us, to satisfy our pleadings withal, and encourage our hope for acceptance by, and this proceeds from pride, and is the principal reason why awakened Sinners stand off, and are not willing to apply themselves to God for it. But when our sin appears to be exceeding sinful, our hands are now knocked off, we lay aside all such pretensions; and now we are made to come as *poor, miserable, blind, and naked* Creatures. This makes true beggars of us, and puts us into the posture of the *Publican*, of whom, *Luk. 18. 13. The Publican standing afar off, would*

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would not lift so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to mee a sinner. We now see that there is no other hope but what resolves entirely unto Gods mercy.

2. It helps us to justify God; and there is no hope for us to speed in asking forgiveness of him, without this. God will have the glory of his free grace, ascribed to him by every one whom he forgiveth; and this will never be, till we plumply confess that the greatest severity of his Law is very righteous; that we are justly condemned, and that there is no injustice at all to be imputed to him: hence that in, *Dan. 9. 8, 9.* To us belongs confusion of face, to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses; and we can never come up fully to this, till we see a world of vileness in our sin, and the more we see of this, the more will our hearts be perswaded of Gods righteousness, which is one thing that the Spirit cometh to convince us of, *Joh. 16. 8.* and till it be so, Sinners will be ever finding fault with the

the Law, and charging cruelty and injustice upon it.

3. *It helps us in our confessions.* There is a thorough confession which we observed that God expects of us in order to our obtaining forgiveness from him : he would not have us to mince and curtail it, but the more ample and aggravated it is, the more is God honoured by it; because it carries in it a discovery of the deeper sense that we have of it on our hearts. He that hath a right conception of the evil there is in Sin, will then see that he cannot exceed in expatiating on it, and laying of himself low by it. They are but lank Confessions which that man will make, who doth not *Know the plague of his own heart*, and how evil and bitter his Sin is : God therefore invites his people to this, *Jer. 2. 19. Know and see that it is an evil and bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.*

4. *It serves to further our importunity.* Our Cryes for pardon ought to be very urgent and earnest, as of those that apprehend

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prehend the forlorn condition that Sin hath put us in ; and nothing will make them to be so, but the resentment which we have on our hearts of that sin which gives us the Occasion to pray for pardon. It is felt trouble that draws forth our request to have it removed from us ; and therefore these requests will be more or less earnest in proportion to that sense : light thoughts of sin, will produce but flat and complemental petitions about it ; but terrible apprehensions of it, will put us upon loud cries to have it taken away. Such doubtless was *David's* sense, when he prayed in, *Psal. 41. 4. Lord, be merciful to me, heal my Soul, for I have sinned against thee.*

5. *It Commends to us the Merits and Obedience of Christ.* We are directed by the Gospel, to seek for pardon on *Christ's* account ; and we are told that our reliance for the obtaining it, must be upon his Satisfaction. Now this shews us how infinitely we are beholden to him, for that he hath thus laid in for us, and so it comes to make his Obedience very precious

cious to us. There are none that prize a Saviour so as they do, who have found sin to be beyond measure evil, and the guilt of it to be beyond any other power of taking it away, but the vertue of his Sacrifice : it will make us to say with Paul, 1 Tim. i. 14. *The Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant.*

6. *It makes us restless till we get an answer of peace from God to our petitions.* They that have slighty conceptions of sin, neglect their prayers, and regard not what becomes of them : but this will put us upon repeated requests, & agreeable fervency in them, whiles God seems to delay us, and make us to resolve that we will never let him alone, or take a denial of him. He that knows what his sin will righteously cost him, when he comes to receive his recompense, if it be not now forgiven, will follow God unweariedly, until he hath given him a sealed pardon ; this was it which drew forth those repeated requests which David puts up to him, in Psal. 51.

4. *This*

4. *This consideration will also serve to help our faith.* Satan indeed, and a mis-giving heart will make use of it to discourage us: and put us upon despair by looking on our sins in their magnitude and multitude; but the Spirit of God, in those who are his, fortifies their faith with it, and that in two respects.

I. *It tells us there is a work for God to do.* God acquaints us in his word, which is the Rule of our faith, that he delights to do like himself in all his works; and then to discover his glory to us, when all other help and hope fails us; and what is this but to draw up our Eyes to him, when we cannot tell what to do? Faith therefore will now argue, what though it out-bids all the power of the Creation to take away the Guilt of these grievous Sins of mine, yet God can do it, and in doing of it he will give a signal demonstration of his power. Faith saith, I know and am fully perswaded that God can forgive it if he please, let it be never so great, and there is an occasion now for him

him to make it appear how sufficient an object of trust he is, when all other refuge fails; and *herein make me a pattern to them that shall hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* 1 Tim. I. 16.

2. It also tells us that he will herein Glorify his Grace abundantly. An eye of faith also looks upon the great design of the New-Covenant, to be the making of the Grace of God to appear in its most orient colours: and therefore the believing soul under the deep sense of sin, thus argueth; here is an opportunity for the Grace of God to be the most resplendent: how will the pardoning mercy of God be herein magnified? how will the inexhaustible virtue of Christ's Obedience be hereby demonstrated? God will in this get to himself a name, which shall be celebrated with the most joyful acclamations of praise to eternal ages. It therefore helps us believingly to put up that petition, *Psal. 79. 9: Deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy name sake; and to back it with that stimulation, verse ult. So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever;*

ever ; we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

5. This consideration will also help to prepare us for a right improving of this pardon, when we have obtained it. When Gods people have gotten any thing of him in a way of prayer, they ought to return to him the acknowledgment thereof in praises, and therein to use it for his Glory, Psal. 50. 15. Call upon me, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me ; and in respect to pardon, this consideration will abundantly contribute hereto ; for,

1. It will make us the more to admire the riches of Grace appearing in it: Gods great aim is at the glory of this, in all the special favours which he confers upon his own, Eph. 1. 6. To the praise of the glory of the riches of his grace ; and the more our hearts are touched with the apprehension of this, the more will they be filled with admiration at, and acclamations to it. Now, the greater our sins have been, and found so to be by our right consideration of them, the more doth the grace
E appear,

appear, that was exerted in the procuring for, and applying to us, a free pardon of them. Such therefore will be alwayes harping upon this string, and think that they can never enough expatiate on it. This made *Paul* so to commorate on the displaying of the Grace of God that had been manifested in him, *1 Tim. 1, 12. to 17.*

2. *It will enflame our hearts the more with love to God.* There are none in the world, whose love burneth so bright towards Christ, as of those whose sins have been exceedingly great, and born home upon their Souls with the apprehension of the greatness of them, to consider that this notwithstanding, God hath forgiven them all freely. So our Saviour argueth, *Luk. 7. 47. Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

3. *It will make us to walk the more humbly afterwards.* There is nothing which more helpeth the Grace of Humility, to its perfect working in a Child of God, than

than the remembrance of what horrible and deep died sins he hath been guilty of, and that yet God should forgive them. He is ever reflecting on these two together; what his Sins have been, and what a pardon is bestowed upon him: he will be on all occasions turning his eye this way; and indeed the greatness of Sin will never work to a kindly Humiliation, till it be joyned with the apprehension of a pardon.

4. *It will help us the more chearfully and stedfastly to Serve God for the future.* Such an experience as this, when it works kindly on the Soul, will mightily strengthen Obedience; and this is a fruit of that love which it doth produce and excite in the heart: it will, as often as he turns his eye that way, make him to say as he, *Psal. 116. 12. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?* and now he thinks that he can never do or suffer too much for the honour of that God who hath so appeared to him.

USE. *Let it serve to direct us in the right*
 E 2 *improve-*

A Remedy

improvement of such a consideration as this is ; and that may be in two respects.

I. *Beware of taking Satans glosses.* He will endeavour all he can to make us count Sin to be nothing, so long as he can keep us in carnal security by such an esteem, and for that end supplies us with arguments of the flesh, accommodated thereto : and when the Spirit of God convinceth the man of his sin, and so he can hold this device no longer, he then would make our Sin appear great beyond the extent of a pardon, so to precipitate us into despair : take heed of this, it will drive you from the use of means, and so undo you.

2. *Oppose to the consideration of the greatness of your sin, and ballance it with these three things, and establish your faith on them.*

I. *The great sufficiency there is in the Redemption of Christ.* It is through this that you come to have any hope of a pardon. Hence the Apostle refers it hither, Col. 1.

14. *In whom we have Redemption through his*

his blood, even the forgiveness of Sins. Out of doubt then there is hope for pardon for all those sins, which do not exceed the vertue of that Redemption: and this is declared to be very extensive, Hebr. 7. 25. *He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to him; think then what a price he paid for this purchase: we are put upon such a consideration, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Ye are redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God.*

2. *The design of the New Covenant.* In that it is that your hope is revealed to you; the Old Covenant had none in it: Now consider that the opening of that Covenant were to set forth the riches of Grace in the salvation of Sinful man by Christ; so long therefore as you have a prospect how Grace may be exalted in your being pardoned, let that encourage you to wait to see his great salvation,

3. *The contrivance of infinite Wisdom to make Justice and Grace to agree in this design.* This is usually a great discouragement in Satans temptation, when Sin is

10 **A Remedy against Despair.**

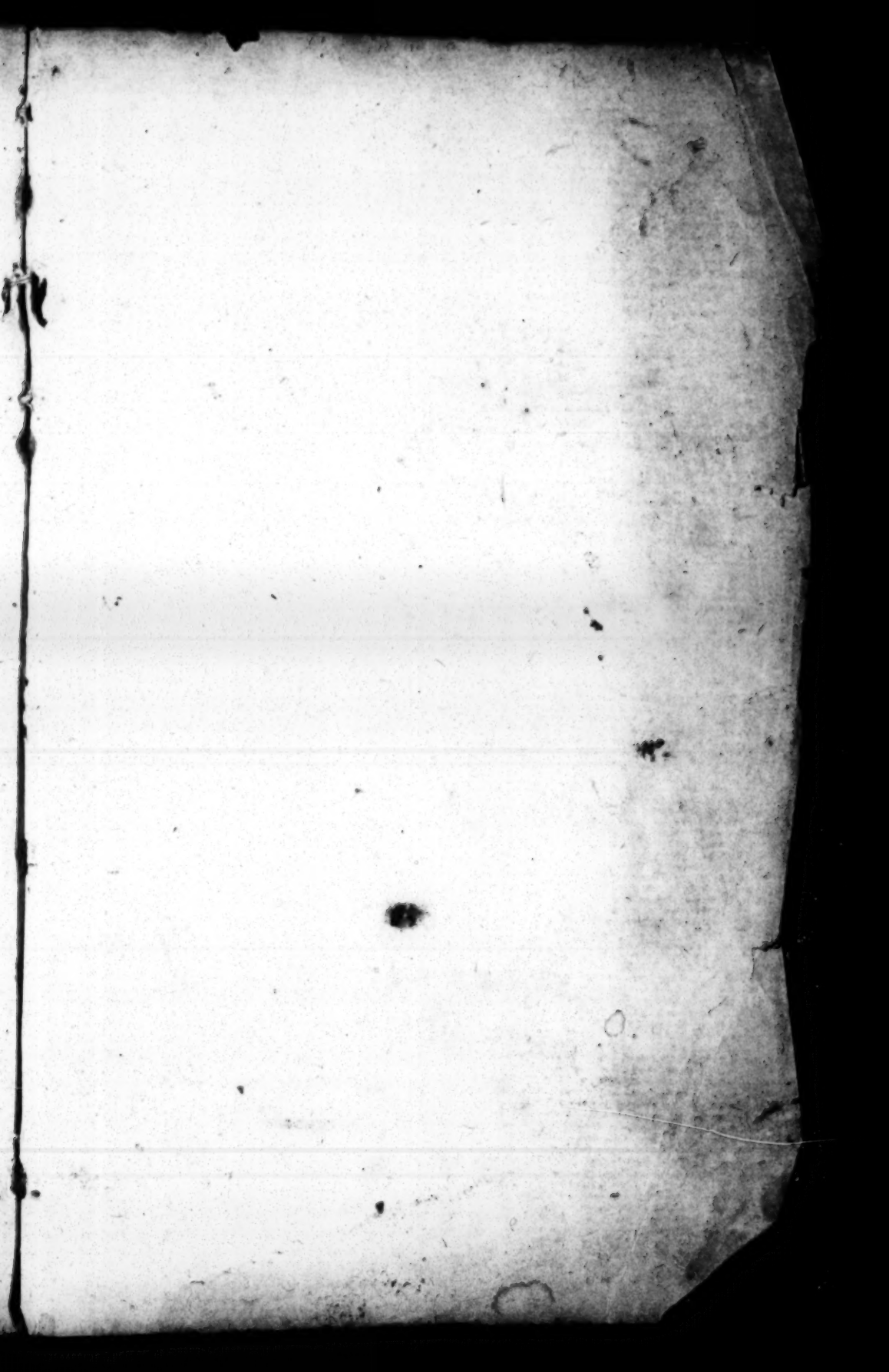
made to appear great ; how can God be just, and forgive such horrible Sins, as ours are : but here is a sufficient answer to that demur ; these two glorious Attributes are combined in this affair, Psal. 85.

10. Mercy and Truth are met together, Justice and Peace have kissed each other.

God displayed such a Righteousness, as takes away all that seems to obstruct the communication of a pardon righteously, and that he may be both just, and the justifier of them that believe in his Son Jesus Christ,

Rom. 3. 26. Let then the greatness of our sins drive us the faster to Christ, resolving that if he will he can pardon them, and if he do, Everlasting Hallelujahs shall be Sung to him on that account.

F I N I S.



145 Psalm 59.6

The glory of thy majesty

shall be my constant theme

of all the wonders of thy works

And my song shall still declare

Or

The honour of thy Majesty

shall be my constant theme

and all the wonders of thy works

admirable shall proclaim

6

men of thy awful mighty acts
shall break with humble fear
I also thy magnificence
will ever declare

